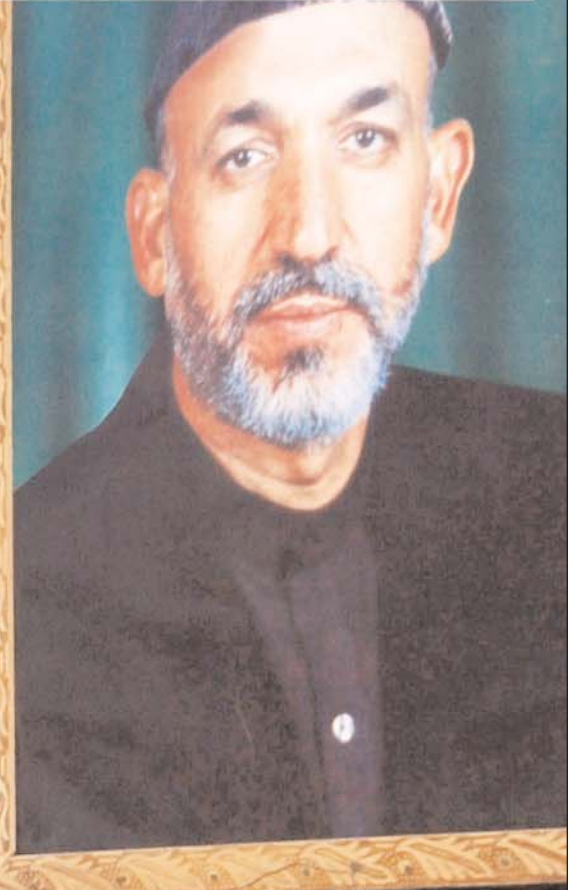


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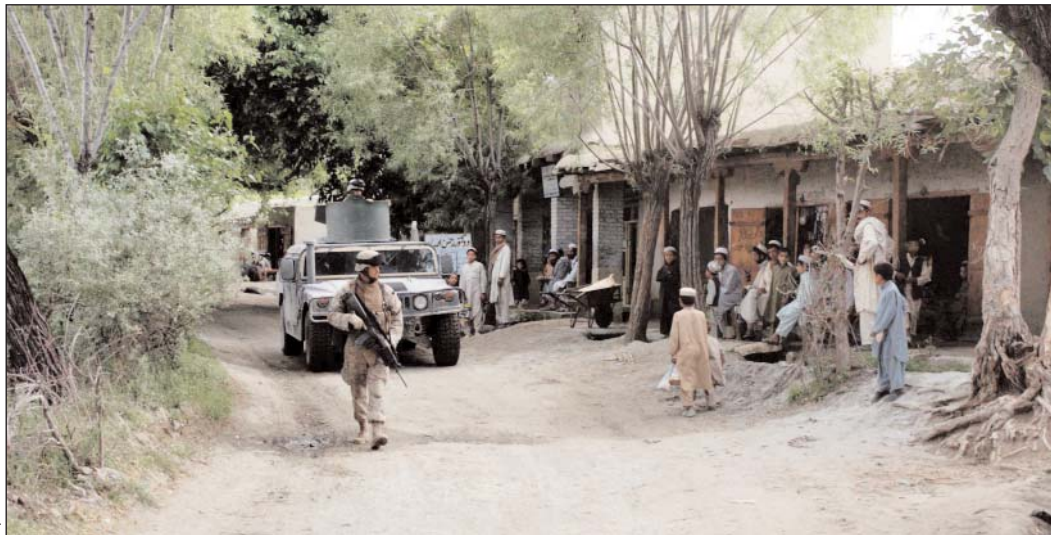
Freedom Watch

Combined Forces Command - Afghanistan



**Paktika governor holds rally
to encourage participation in
coming elections**

Page 8



Spc. Harold Fields

Marines from the 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, carry out a mission during Operation Celtics in Nangarhar Province on May 23.

Contents



Staff Sgt. Ascencion Carmona, 212th Military Police Company, walks by a truck filled with Afghan children waving Afghan flags in Orgun-E, Paktika Province. Governor Manghal gave spoke to villagers asking them for more participation in the establishment of the government. See story pages 8-9
Sgt. Douglas DeMaio

Page 3: Former Taliban leader embraces government

Page 4: Omar bashes "sell out" of Afghanistan

Page 5: ANA launches first vaccine program

Page 6: Weapons, caches turned in across Afghanistan

Page 7: Operation Nam Dong II

Page 10: New infantrymen in Afghanistan

Page 11: Combat Action Badge design announced



Page 12: Got pallets?

Page 13: Groundbreaking marks start of hospital

Page 15: Afghan army builds economy, brings fear to anti-Coalition militants



(Cover) Paktika Governor Manghal speaks to Afghans in Orgun-E. The governor was visiting the district to encourage more participation in the establishment of the government in the coming elections.

Freedom Watch

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CFC-A Commander - Lt. Gen. Karl W. Eikenberry
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Former Taliban leader embraces government

By Staff Sgt. Jacob Caldwell
CTF Bayonet Public Affairs

KANDAHAR CITY, Afghanistan – A prominent Taliban leader has renounced his ties to the insurgents and has decided to run for political office in Helmand Province.

Rais Bahgrani, a long-time member of the Taliban, decided after a series of meetings with local and national officials, that he can better help the people of Helmand Province by supporting the government of Afghanistan and participating in parliamentary elections this fall.

"Ever since the presidential election, I have spoken with and tried to help the government of Afghanistan," said Bahgrani.

"Since I heard that there were Americans and Coalition forces coming to Afghanistan, people that had peaceful intentions for Afghanistan, I have had a dialogue with other Taliban leaders and have tried to get them to leave the government to those people who want peace for Afghanistan," said Bahgrani.

After President Hamid Karzai came to office, Bahgrani went to his home in Helmand Province and took a rest for six months. He had meetings with Pashtun leaders, the governor of Helmand Province and Coalition mem-

bers during those six months.

Bahgrani had not yet made his public declaration of reconciliation to the new government of Afghanistan, but he supported the presidential election by working with district and tribal leaders

to encourage people to participate in the election process.

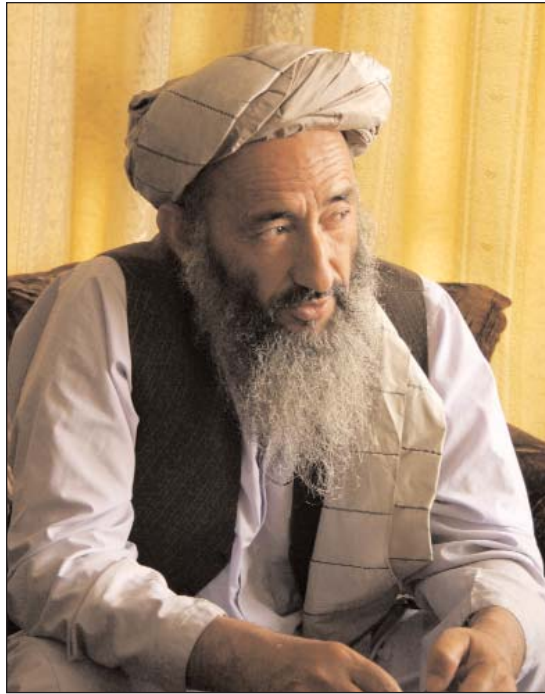
Coalition members attempted to persuade Bahgrani to turn himself in, but he was hesitant to do so until the government's reconciliation program put out clear guidance on how the process would work. Now that his declaration has been made public, Bahgrani has big plans for himself and for the people of Helmand Province.

Bahgrani has seen the progress made in Afghanistan by the new government and has decided to participate directly in the upcoming regional elections by running for a parliamentary seat in Helmand Province. He has a list of issues to work on.

"There is a dam that needs to be completed. Water needs to be re-routed to different areas of the province," said Bahgrani. "Roads are also a problem. We need more good roads in the province. We need schools. There is no education system here.

"We also need clinics in the mountainous areas. It is very difficult for the people to come to the city for treatment."

Building new bridges and helping farmers in the province are also on Bahgrani's agenda.



Staff Sgt. Jacob Caldwell

Rais Bahgrani, a former prominent Taliban leader, discusses his past and his decision to run for political office in Helmand Province.

Insurgents renounce violence

By Sgt. 1st Class Todd Oliver
CJTF-76 Public Affairs

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – Two former insurgents began the process of formally renouncing violence and swearing reconciliation to the government of Afghanistan in late May.

Gul Amir and Mullah Ismail are working with Afghan and Coalition officials to formalize their efforts at joining with the government of Afghanistan to promote a safe and more prosperous future.

The Takhim-E Solh program, or Strengthening Peace program, is a method

by which former insurgents and other anti-Coalition fighters can renounce violence and join, after taking several key steps, with the people of Afghanistan.

Gul Amir and Mullah Ismail, who were low-level insurgents, are welcome into the program as long as they pledge loyalty to the government of Afghanistan and renounce violence against Afghan and Coalition forces. The program is designed to target lower and mid-level anti-Coalition fighters like these two, while high-ranking members of the Taliban and individuals accused of war crimes are deliberately not targeted for participation.

Gul Amir and Mullah Ismail both expressed a desire to return to their homes and work with Afghan and Coalition forces.

"From the beginning I have never had anything to do with those people (insurgents) and have had nothing against the government and Coalition," read a statement by Gul Amir that was signed during his initial interview for the program with Afghan and Coalition forces.

The process of reconciliation will take some time as their backgrounds are checked to ensure they are not accused of any serious crimes against the Afghan people or Coalition forces. The process must be completed to allow the former insurgents to live, work and

exist peacefully in Afghanistan.

Takhim-E Solh "is a vital tool for the government of Afghanistan as it continues the difficult process of rebuilding this war-torn nation," said Brig. Gen. James G. Champion, Combined Joint Task Force-76's deputy commanding general for operations. "It's important for those individuals who may have once belonged to the Taliban or other organizations to know they can come back home as long as they accept the democratically elected government here. A lot of individuals may fear they or their families will be imprisoned if they return, but that's clearly not the case."

Omar bashes "sell out" of Afghanistan

By Sgt. 1st Class Todd Oliver
CJTF-76 Public Affairs

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – Insurgents bombed a recently completed school construction project near Shkin as Taliban leader Mullah Omar reported to the Afghan Islamic Press May 25 that President Hamid Karzai was "selling out" Afghanistan to the United States.

Taliban leader Mullah Omar, who is in hiding, bashed Karzai's effort to seek continued U.S. support for reconstruction and security assistance in Afghanistan. AIP reported Omar saying, "The pact in Washington between Bush and Karzai is in fact a deed to sell the motherland of Afghanistan."

The day before Omar made the statement, insurgents bombed a newly completed, United States funded, school. This attack, according to Coalition reports, "upset and angered village elders and religious leaders who were shocked that insurgents would destroy a place of learning in the presence of children."

"It's shocking to many of us, Afghans and Coalition alike, that anyone would stoop so low as to attack a school," said Brig. Gen. James G. Champion, Combined Joint Task Force-76 deputy commanding general for operations.

"These are the acts of desperate individuals that no longer have the strength or courage to attack people capable of defending themselves. The insurgents have been rendered so ineffective and have become so marginalized that their only hope of affecting our efforts at rebuilding Afghanistan is to attack the very things their country needs and wants the most. It's an act of desperation, by desperate individuals."

The report went on to state that there were no injuries as a result of the explosion. Local police and the mayor suspected insurgents in the region planted the device during the school's construction so that maximum damage could be inflicted.

Coalition efforts at rebuilding Afghanistan, a nation decimated by decades of war, conflict and corruption, top nearly \$5 billion. These efforts encompass key projects that include a modern highway system linking all of Afghanistan's major cities, to smaller projects such as school construction and hospital modernization efforts.

During Operation Determined Resolve, currently ongoing throughout Afghanistan, Afghan and Coalition forces have already distributed more than 10 tons of supplies to regions in desperate need of assistance.

Coalition medical personnel, often in conjunction with Afghan medical personnel, provided health care to more than 700 Afghans, performing immunizations and treating a variety of illnesses and injuries.

The destruction of public works such as health care clinics and schools is a common tactic used by insurgents. On May 10, insurgents attacked a U.S. Agency for International Development school and clinic. A provincial reconstruction team in Qalat also reported another school attacked by insurgents May 30. Both attacks caused minimal damage and no injuries.



Photo courtesy Kandahar Public Affairs

Service members go out for a morning run at Kandahar Airfield.

Afghan, Coalition forces break illegal checkpoint

By Sgt. 1st Class Todd Oliver
CJTF-76 Public Affairs

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – Afghan and Coalition forces arrested three adults and one teen after discovering an illegal checkpoint north of Deh Rawod May 24.

The individuals arrested were in possession of an automatic weapon, three magazines of ammunition

and two identification cards with different names.

The purpose of this particular checkpoint is under investigation; however they are often a method by which criminals can collect money via illegal tolls.

"By stopping petty thieves and bandits from robbing innocent Afghans, the government of Afghanistan is invest-

ing in the future prosperity and continued peace of the Afghan people," said Lt. Col. Jerry O'Hara, Combined Joint Task Force-76 spokesman.

"Afghans shouldn't have to be afraid of being robbed while traveling from city to city," said O'Hara. "Safe and secure routes between population centers is a tenet of an economically sound nation."

ANA launches first vaccine program

By Lt. Col. Andrea R. Krull
OMC-A Defense Resource Sector

KABUL, Afghanistan – The Afghan National Army launched Afghanistan's first military vaccine program May 19, providing vaccinations for 185 soldiers at the Kabul Military Training Center's Troop Medical Clinic.

The ANA's Office of the Surgeon General, in conjunction with the Office of Military Cooperation Afghanistan, initiated the program to improve the health of the soldiers and enhance mission readiness by protecting the ANA soldier force from historically debilitating diseases.

"Without a doubt, immunizations are the most effective means of protecting our soldiers' health and therefore, our No. 1 priority project," said Professor Jan Mohammed Khalazai, director of Preventive Medicine in the OTSG.

The vaccination program was developed by members of the OTSG Preventive Medicine Working Group as they discussed measures to improve the health of Afghan soldiers. Their goal was to ensure the highest level of mission readiness possible.

"One hundred soldiers can be immunized for the same cost as treating one ill soldier with a vaccine-preventable disease," said Maj. Gen. Abdul Wassay Ranjbar, therapeutic deputy of the OTSG and chairman of the Preventive Medicine Working Group.

Ranjbar's working group is comprised of medical professionals from the OTSG as well as a U.S. medical mentor from the OMC-A Defense Resource Sector directorate.

A number of factors went into planning the vaccination program. Over the course of several months, the group discussed all aspects of the program and explored the best way to implement it.

First, the working group identified which vaccines should be offered. After reviewing a number of considerations

including disease impact, cost and logistics, four vaccines were selected: polio, typhoid, MMR (measles, mumps and rubella), and meningococcal. While these diseases vary in the extent of illness and death they cause, ultimately, they all have an adverse effect on the ability of soldiers to accomplish their mission.

The working group determined the best place to initiate the program was at KMTC where all new ANA recruits complete basic training. Brig. Gen. Ghulam Sakhi Assifi, KMTC garrison commander, and Col. Obaid, KMTC Troop Medical Clinic commander, were fully supportive of this initiative.

Before the program got under way, including disease impact, cost and logistics, four vaccines were selected: polio, typhoid, MMR (measles, mumps and rubella), and meningococcal. While these diseases vary in the extent of illness and death they cause, ultimately, they all have an adverse effect on the ability of soldiers to accomplish their mission.



Staff Sgt. Victoria Meyer

Afghan National Army trainee Joma Din from Baghlan Province cringes as Capt. Abdul Wali, a physician assistant at the ANA Hospital, administers a vaccine. Each soldier received four vaccines in Afghanistan's first military vaccination program.

See Vaccines page 7

Enduring Voices

How do you deal with stress during deployment?



Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class Felicia Weigel
Combined Joint Task Force 76

"If I'm really stressed out, I'll go to the gym. I also listen to music and write. I pretty much do the normal things people do to deal with stress."



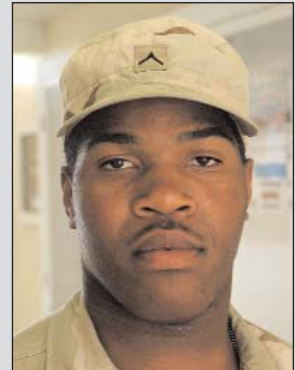
Army Sgt. 1st Class Travis Baker
Joint Readiness Training Center

"I mainly try to stay optimistic about what is going on; negativity will kill you. I try to find things to do to occupy my time."



New Zealand Pvt. Phillip Logan
Bamian PRT

"I spend time with friends and play sports. Sometimes playing sports will relieve my stress."



Army Pvt. Jake Spicer
1st Battery, 114th Field Artillery

"I deal with stress by buying some music and relax while listening to it. I also go to MWR to shoot pool and call my family; that's the way I keep myself calm."

Weapons, caches turned in across Afghanistan

By Sgt. 1st Class Todd Oliver
CJTF-76 Public Affairs

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – An unusual number of munitions were turned into Afghan and Coalition forces across Afghanistan May 25, accounting for more than 500 mortar rounds, 100 rockets and other munitions.

A total of three caches were discovered with the help of Afghan citizens. In each case, Afghans either reported the caches to Afghan and Coalition forces or led them to the cache's location.

"We cannot say it enough; these munitions are volatile and dangerous," said Maj. Michael Hicks, Combined Joint Task Force-76's explosive ordnance disposal team commander. "Not only are they routinely used in the construction of improvised explosive devices and for direct attacks on both Coalition and Afghan forces, but they are unstable and poorly maintained. When not handled properly, old munitions stockpiles fall into a state of disrepair and become inherently more dangerous."

The caches were discovered in southern and eastern Afghanistan near the cities of Ghazni and Qalat.

Several land mines, fuses and various IED-construction components, 536 mortar rounds, 103 rocket-propelled grenades, 257 recoilless rifle rounds and 111 rockets were discovered.

While Afghanistan's decades of conflict make the discovery of munitions

almost commonplace, the discovery of functional and complete weapons systems is a bit more unusual.

In addition to the munitions listed above, one complete mortar system, two recoilless rifles and three Russian-manufactured machine guns were also turned in with the caches.

Besides removing these dangerous items from areas where they could harm civilians, they are often given to the Afghan National Army or Afghan National Police to use.

"When these caches are turned in, it weakens the insurgents' ability to attack Afghan and Coalition forces. Because Afghans are behind most of these turn-ins, that tells us that they want peace, not war," said 1st Lt. Ross Bettis, Afghan National Army liaison officer.

"The insurgents don't have the ability to fly or truck-in supplies the way we

and the ANA do. They have to bring them in piece by piece. When these caches are discovered and turned in, it depletes their stockpiles, weakening their ability to hurt the people of this country," said Bettis.

"The items also help the ANA in various ways. They can simply be used to increase the ANA's supply of ammunition or can provide for valuable training opportunities on weapon systems," said Bettis.



Spc. Tiffany Levesque

Sgt. Paulo Valai, a member of the 173rd Forward Logistic Element, loads a tractor onto a CH-47 Chinook. The tractor is being given to residents of Deh Rawod.

Children score cache for Coalition forces

By Sgt. 1st Class Todd Oliver
CJTF-76 Public Affairs

BAMIAN, Afghanistan – Afghan children and local police led Coalition forces to three rockets and a missile near the town of Bamian May 24.

The children reported the location of a cache consisting of a rocket-propelled grenade, three mortars and approximately 40 small-arms rounds to New Zealand soldiers working at a Provisional Reconstruction Team site near Bamian.

As the children took Coalition forces to the cache, local police also led the

soldiers to another area where three serviceable rockets and a surface-to-surface Russian-built missile were discovered.

"These children were doing the right thing by reporting these munitions to Coalition forces," said Maj. Michael Hicks, commander of Combined Joint Task Force-76's explosive ordnance disposal team. "We cannot do enough to remind parents and children that unexploded ordnance is dangerous and deadly. These items explode every day, killing and maiming Afghans."

"The most important thing children should remember if they discover

unexploded ordnance is to not touch it and tell a grown-up," Hicks said. "Adults should immediately notify local police or Afghan and Coalition forces."

The cache, missile and rockets were transported to a nearby base where they will be destroyed.

Meanwhile, at a border-control point along the Pakistan border, an artillery round was discovered hidden inside a tree trunk after an Afghan child reported its location to forces there. Afghan forces safely destroyed the round.

Two killed, 18 detained during Operation Nam Dong II

By Sgt. 1st Class Todd Oliver

CJTF-76 Public Affairs

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – Coalition and Afghan National Army forces conducted two operations May 23 that resulted in the deaths of at least two insurgents and the capture of 18 suspected insurgents.

The first mission, which occurred west of Tarin Kowt, began as Afghan and U.S. forces exited a CH-47 Chinook helicopter and began receiving small-arms fire. Coalition forces returned fire, killing two individuals while another fled. The individual linked up with approximately five others and fled into a nearby cave. Close air support was

called in to destroy the cave complex. Ten individuals were detained for questioning.

The second operation consisted of the search of two areas and led to the capture of eight suspected insurgents.

"We suspected that the Afghan and Coalition forces were going to encounter insurgent forces during the course of Operation Nam Dong II," said Army Lt. Col. Jerry O'Hara, Combined Joint Task Force-76 spokesman.

"Afghan forces, led by Afghan leader-

ship, are taking control of these regions from insurgents. The people who live and work in these areas are

experiencing, first-hand, the effectiveness and professionalism of the Afghan National Army."



Airman 1st Class Jack "Cowboy" Bartleson, a vehicle maintenance technician with the 455th Air Expeditionary Wing, works on the engine of a forklift. He is deployed to Bagram Airfield from Langley Air Force Base, Va.

Capt. Mark D. Gibson

Vaccines, from page 5

Brig. Gen. Razia Rahimi, chief of ANA Nursing in the OTSG, volunteered nurses from the ANA National Military Hospital to administer the first vaccinations.

"Our nurses were the obvious choice since they already administer medications and have been trained in proper hygiene practices," said Razia. OMC-A and Task Force Phoenix medical personnel provided vaccine-specific training for the ANA nurses and certain medics.

"They are eager to learn and expand their knowledge. It was a real pleasure teaching this group. It gives us great hope that this program will be sustained over



Staff Sgt. Victoria Meyer

Maj. Malalai, who like many Afghans uses only one name, administers the first vaccine of the new military vaccination program to Afghan National Army trainee Ali Jan from Bamian Province at the Kabul Military Training Center's Troop Medical Clinic as Dr. Nadera Hayat Burhani, deputy minister of the Ministry of Public Health (center), and others look on.

time," said Staff Sgt. Francisco Sias, a U.S. Army medic and mentor for the KMTC Troop Medical Clinic.

The nurses will train the remaining medics to administer the vaccines and continue the program.

The medics also received training on documenting the vaccines in the newly developed ANA medical records as

well as the proper storage of the vaccine in refrigerators purchased specifically for this purpose.

The members of the OTSG Preventive Medicine Working Group were particularly excited about this project because it is a tangible product that will aid soldiers in maintaining and improving their health.

"Preventive

medicine is the foundation of all health services. We need to spread the word that preventive medicine activities are the most cost-effective and have the greatest impact on protecting our soldiers' health," said Professor (Brig. Gen.) Mohammed Ismail Zabi, director for Policy and Strategy in the OTSG.

The goal is for every ANA soldier to receive the vaccines. The plan is to integrate this program into the Military Entrance Processing Station once a permanent facility is built and all recruits process through it. As the vaccination program is refined, it will be expanded to include those soldiers who have already completed basic training and are assigned to one of the four ANA regional commands located in Kandahar, Gardez, Mazar-e-Sharif and Herat.

"If our army is not a healthy army, they would not be able to do their duties well," said Assifi during the opening ceremony of the vaccination program. "I appreciate, from the bottom of my heart, the ANA surgeon general office and Coalition partners who helped put this vaccination campaign in action."

ANA, ANP provide security to Paktika governor, spread message

By Sgt. Douglas DeMaio
20th Public Affairs
Detachment

FOB ANED, Afghanistan – Supported by U.S. forces in Paktika Province, Afghan National Army and Police personnel provided security for Provincial Governor Manghal as he visited five districts in his province during part of Operation 1774 May 15-21.

Nakah, Orgun-E, Zerok, Gayan and Bermel are five districts Manghal visited during his visit to encourage Afghan people in those districts to participate in the democratic development of the country.

"If the government does not have help from the people, then it will not be able to do anything," Manghal said during a meeting with residents in Orgun-E.

"Right now we have a good president, an honest man," he said.

What the government needs from the people is participation and representation, Manghal said.

After speaking with the villagers during his visit to the district, Manghal met with



Photos by Sgt. Douglas DeMaio

An Afghan National Army soldier stands in front of children who fill the streets in Orgun-E to welcome Paktika Governor Manghal during a visit to encourage more participation in the establishment of the government for the coming elections.

the shura, who are the village leaders, and had a discussion on the importance of getting leaders involved by representing their communities and their countrymen.

"So far it has been really positive," said civil affairs

Maj. Mark Henderix, who travels with an information team to the next district a day before the governor's visit.

"Basically what we are doing is facilitating the governor's visit to each district in Paktika Province," Henderix said. "We go in the day prior and prep the town. We meet with the mayor, chief of police, the Shura and whatever other government leaders are in the district."

While doing this allows the team to provide security, an even more important task for the information team Henderix leads is to encourage the people to come and listen to why the governor is visiting their district.

"The purpose of 1774 is to promote the elections," Henderix said. "The only way the people will have a voice in their government is if they vote and get people to run for office."

To run for office, candidates must get 300 signatures from registered voters in their province, collect nomination documents and pay 10,000 Afghanis, which will be returned if the candidate receives 2 percent of the vote.

Operation 1774 is an information campaign to get more Afghans involved in the government, Henderix said.

Three of the five phases of Operation 1774 have been completed, Henderix said.

Sub-operations Ben Franklin and Scoop Jackson were a success, he said.



Afghan children fill the streets in Orgun-E to welcome Manghal.



Villagers in Orgun-E gather to listen to Paktika Governor Manghal give a speech. The governor was visiting the district to encourage more participation in the establishment of the government.



(Above) An Afghan police officer leads Paktika Governor Manghal and his entourage during his visit to Orgun-E.

(Right) Manghal speaks to Afghans in Orgun-E during a rally to encourage more participation in the establishment of the government.



New infantrymen in Afghanistan

By Maj. Eric Bloom
CJTF Phoenix Public Affairs

Soldiers deployed here officially became infantrymen in a historic ceremony May 28.

The Soldiers were awarded the infantry Military Occupational Specialty upon graduating from only the second infantry-qualification course held in a combat zone; the first was during World War II.

Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix, which trains the Afghan National Army, offered the two-week course for its Soldiers from the Indiana National Guard's 76th Infantry Brigade. The graduates already held a different MOS but now have 11B, Infantry, as a secondary MOS.

Guard Soldiers usually earn the infantry MOS at a Regional Military Academy in the United States, explained Command Sgt. Maj. James Gordon, Task Force Phoenix's command sergeant major. Members of the 76th include infantry instructors from one of the academies, so Phoenix's enlisted leaders asked for and were given permission to hold the course in Afghanistan.

Sgt. Joe McFarren was named the course's Honor Graduate and Spc. Matt Estheiner received the Commandant's Award for academic success.

Forty-six Soldiers began the course. Thirty-five graduated after two demanding weeks of honing their infantry skills.

The course was conducted at Camp Phoenix, on the outskirts of Kabul, and at the Afghan National Army's Kabul Military Training Center.

The Soldiers fired U.S. weapons and ANA weapons. They performed live-fire exercises and practiced Military

Operations in Urban Terrain. When they were in the field, they were always aware a real enemy threat was nearby, as were live landmines.

The qualified 11B instructors assured that training and doctrine standards were maintained throughout the course.



Maj. Eric Bloom

Honor graduate Sgt. Joe McFarren receives a knife from Brig. Gen. Richard Moorhead, commander of Task Force Phoenix, during the infantry qualification course graduation ceremony at Camp Phoenix, May 28. Soldiers of the 76th Infantry Brigade graduated from the first infantry course conducted in a combat zone since World War II.

Girl treated at KAF for burns

By Sgt. 1st Class Todd Oliver
CJTF-76 Public Affairs

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – A 3-year-old Afghan girl was treated for second-degree burns to her left arm from the wrist to the elbow after she was evacuated to Kandahar Airfield's U.S. medical facility May 23.

The girl's condition was brought to the attention of Coalition forces when her mother brought her to a forward operating base north of Shinkay hoping for medical assistance. Medical personnel there, fearing the girl's arm was in danger of amputation, transported her to Kandahar for more intensive

treatment.

While Afghan medical facilities have improved since the fall of the Taliban, burn treatment is still a critical area U.S. forces are able to assist with.

"She's doing fine," said Dr. (Maj.) Michael Woll, general surgeon at the Kandahar medical treatment facility, who, along with Dr. (Lt. Col.) Ronald Place, treated the girl. "In fact, right now, she's playing catch with a kid in the next bed that has a broken leg."

Although the medics at the base originally thought her arm was in danger, the Kandahar medical team were happy to discover the burns were not as bad as originally thought.

"She had minor, second-degree burns

that most likely won't require a skin graft of any sort. We're going to hold her here for a week or so to observe her recovery and make sure she's okay, but after that she will probably be sent home," Woll said.

The girl's injury occurred when scalding milk spilled on her, Woll explained. He and Place took her into the operating room to remove the dead tissue from the burned area, then applied an antibiotic to help the healing process.

"We probably treat four to five Afghan children a week," Woll said. "Although burns are a common injury, we also see too many kids that are hurt by land mines, unexploded ordnance and improvised explosive devices. They're kids, and like any other kids they sometimes play with or around things that they shouldn't."

Combat Action Badge design announced

By Army News Service

WASHINGTON – The Army announced May 27 the design for the Combat Action Badge. The design was approved by Gen. Peter J. Schoomaker, Army chief of staff.

The CAB, featuring both a bayonet and grenade, may be awarded to any Soldier performing assigned duties in an area where hostile fire pay

or imminent danger pay is authorized, who is personally present and actively engaging or being engaged by the enemy, and performing satisfactorily in accordance with the prescribed rules of engagement. Award is not limited by one's branch or military occupational specialty.

"Warfare is still a human endeavor," said Gen. Peter J. Schoomaker. "Our intent is to recognize Soldiers who demonstrate and live the Warrior Ethos."

"The Global War on Terrorism and its associated operations will be the first era of conflict considered for this award," said Lt. Col. Bill Johnson, Human Resources Command chief of military awards. He added: "September 18, 2001, is the effective date for the new award. That is when

President Bush signed Senate Joint Resolution 23, authorizing the use of military force against those

responsible for the recent attacks launched against the United States."

The CAB will go into immediate production and should be available late this summer or early fall through unit supply and military clothing sales stores.

For more information, visit U.S. Army Badges, The Institute of Heraldry Web site, <http://www.tioh.hqda.pentagon.mil/badges/UnitedStatesArmyBadges.htm>.



PRT members attend historic shura in Bughran District

By Staff Sgt. Jacob Caldwell
Task Force Bayonet Public Affairs

BAGHRAN, Afghanistan – Members of the Lashkar Gah Provincial Reconstruction Team attended a historic shura May 24 in the village of Bughran in northern Helmand Province.

Baghran is also the hometown of former prominent Taliban leader Abdul Rahid, known as Rais Baghrani.

Baghrani is a recent participant in the Strengthening Peace program sponsored by the Afghanistan government that brings insurgents back into society. Baghrani now plans to run for a parliament seat in the upcoming elections.

It was the first time PRT members had been to the district and they were there at the request of the 100 Bughran District elders who were in attendance. All were interested in bringing reconstruction efforts to the remote district.

Many concerns were brought to light by the district elders during the meeting: a reliable and clean water supply, jobs, electric power for the village, communications, the building of a new mosque and the fact that most farmers are still feeling the ramifications of the recent drought.

Members of the Lashkar Gah PRT are excited at the opportunity and are sure they can help.

"To be invited here is a major breakthrough," said Lt. Col. Jim Hogburg, commander of the Lashkar Gah PRT.

Capt. Dan Glanz, the team's civil affairs officer, agrees.

See Shura page 14

AAFES Services Hours of Operation

Bagram Air Base

PX	Massage
0230-1630	0400-1800
Shoppette	Alterations
0230-1630	0430-1430
Burger King	Embroidery
0430-1730	Shop
Food Court	0430-1430
0600-1630	Gift Shops
Coffee Shop	0430-1430
24 hours	Sports Apparel
Barber Shop	0430-1430
0430-1530	Black Ops Store
Day Spa	0430-1530
0400-1600	

Kandahar Airfield

PX	Day Spa
0500-1700	0500-1700
Burger King	Alterations
0430-1730	0500-1700
Pizza Hut	Embroidery
0600-1800	Shop
Subway	0500-1700
0600-1430	Gift Shops
Coffee Shop	0500-1700
24hrs	Sports Apparel
Main Barber Shop	0500-1700
0500-1700	Black Ops
Lagoon Barber	Store
Shop	0500-1700
0300-1700	Leather Shop
	0500-1700

TF Phoenix

PX
0430-1630
Barber
Shop
0330-1530
Alterations
0330-1630
Coffee
Shop
24 hours

Camp Eggers

PX
0430-1630
Barber
Shop
0330-1530
Coffee
Shop
24 hours

** All times in
Zulu/GMT*

Got pallets?



By Capt. Mark Gibson
455th Air Expeditionary Wing Public Affairs

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – It's "mission accomplished" for the pallet and net team, dedicated members of the U.S. Air Force's 455th Expeditionary Logistics Readiness Squadron who have returned more than \$3.7 million in pallets, nets, and other airlift assets to the transportation system over three months.

While assets are supposed to be returned to the airlift system within three days, many units thought it was okay to leave their cargo sitting on pallets during their entire deployment – four months to a year.

"Once we explained to units how easy it would be to get their pallets back when it was time to redeploy, they had no problem returning them to the system right away," said Capt. Jason Kalin, the squadron's operations officer, who was designated to head up pallet and

net recovery for all of Afghanistan.

The team started out by simply hunting down pallets lying around the base at the direction of Maj. Richard Fillman, squadron commander.

"Most people were surprised we were retrieving them," said Tech. Sgt. Milton Spivey, an air transportation craftsman. "But they need to be put back into the system and reutilized. Otherwise, you have to buy more."

It was not only the cost but the critical shortage of pallets and nets – as little as one week's supply at some key aerial ports – that prompted the Air Force's Air Mobility Command to issue a call for better pallet accountability.

Over time, efforts shifted more and more to educating organizations on the process of returning the assets. The squadron informed units that contracted transportation services were available to return pallets to the cargo yard, and that it only took a phone call to the squadron to have them picked up.

"Things got easier when the word started getting out to people," explained air transportation journeyman Senior Airman Tyler Parenteau, who managed the pallet and net inventory at Travis Air Force Base, Calif., before deploying to Bagram. "Instead of us hunting for pallets, people started looking for us."

Kalin agreed: "While spending

an afternoon recovering up to \$100,000 in pallets one by one was fun, it's much better now that they're coming in on their own. The process is in place for the next rotation to simply take over and manage."

The squadron's efforts gained the attention of the director of the Centcom Deployment Distribution Operations Center, Army Maj. Gen. F. Dexter Tutor, during his visit in April. "It's amazing that you are taking the initiative to do this on your own," Tutor said.

Tutor and his team from Central Command were so impressed with the squadron's efforts that they offered to ship a pressure washer to Bagram to make it easier to clean pallets before shipment.

A side benefit to pallet recovery was improving the base's appearance by removing unsightly piles of nets and pallets stuck in mud or propped up against buildings.

"We've pulled pallets from the tops of bunkers, inside conexes, and even the occasional 'pallet porch,'" Kalin said. "Basically, the only empty pallets still lying around Bagram doing nothing are in minefields, so we won't be getting to those anytime soon."

In all, 2,417 pallets and 4,489 net sets were collected and returned, representing nearly \$4 million in savings to the Air Force in three months.

(Top) Air Force Tech. Sgt. Milton Spivey, an air transportation craftsman from the 455th Expeditionary Logistics Readiness Squadron, transports 19 recently-collected pallets to the logistics storage yard for redistribution.

(Left) Air Force Airman Carlos Reyes straps down a pile of top and side nets.



Groundbreaking marks start of hospital

By Sgt. Douglas DeMaio
20th Public Affairs
Detachment

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan — Construction of a new world-class hospital complex here has officially begun after a May 23 groundbreaking ceremony.

Combined Joint Task Force 76 Deputy Commanding General Brig. Gen. John E. Sterling and project leaders used gold shovels to initiate the project that has taken nearly two years of planning.

"We're finally to the point where we are breaking ground," said Capt. Darren McWhirt, health facility project officer.

McWhirt, who works for the Army Health Facility Planning Agency in Falls Church, Va., has been planning and organizing the project since 2003.

He first visited Bagram in September 2003 and once more in May 2004 before deploying here in October 2004 to work the complicated issues in Central Asia.

"The timeline has been difficult in this project," said Army Corps of Engineers Maj. Ed Chamberlayne, who

oversees major projects in Afghanistan.

Identifying a construction site, funding the construction, clearing and de-mining the site and awarding a contract are just a few of the standard processes the project leaders had to contend with to reach a point where work can begin, Chamberlayne said.

"This is a culmination of two years of planning and

organizing to establish a semi-permanent facility to provide Level Three health care to our Soldiers and our Coalition partners here in Afghanistan," said Task Force Strength Commander Col. John A. Giddens.

Level Three health care provides intensive medical care and resuscitative surgery.

The medical treatment at the facility will help injured military members injured in theater return to duty, Giddens said.

"Whenever you are in a combat environment, our ability to return Soldiers to duty is a combat multiplier to the commander on the ground," he said.

The medical complex will be between 76,000 and 83,000 square feet, McWhirt said.

The complex will have a \$1.5 million, 45-bed hospital and housing for med-

ical professionals inside the perimeter.

The hospital will be made of a mixture of masonry construction and modular units that are pre-fabricated, Chamberlayne said.

"It will be the premier medical facility to the Central Command area of operation once complete," Giddens said.

The cost of the complex is estimated to run at more than \$14.4 million.

"There is an economic impact to Afghans," McWhirt said.

The Turkish contractor, Zafer, was awarded the contract and has hired Afghan residents to work on the project.

In addition to the construction of the hospital providing economic gains to Afghans, the Afghans will also benefit from the medical services the hospital will provide once completed.

"We also have a Title 10 responsibility to provide life, limb and eyesight care to (Afghan citizens)," Giddens said.

The project is scheduled to be complete by the end of January 2006.



Sgt. Douglas DeMaio

Using gold shovels to symbolize the beginning of construction on a new world-class hospital complex at Bagram Airfield, Task Force Strength Commander Col. John A. Giddens, Combined Joint Task Force 76 Deputy Commanding General Brig. Gen. John E. Sterling, Zafer Vice President Ibrahim Seyfittinoglu, CJTF-76 Surgeon Cell Commander Col. Richard F. Trotta and Army Corps of Engineers Maj. Ed Chamberlayne (left to right).



PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD

A Marine from the 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, looks out over the open landscape at the base of the mountains in Nangarhar Province during Operation Celtics on May 23.

*Spc. Harold Fields
Combat Camera*

If you have high-quality photos of service members supporting the Coalition mission or enjoying well-deserved off-duty time, please e-mail them to freedomwatch@baf.afgn.army.mil. Please include full identification and caption information, including who is in the photo and what action is taking place.

Shura, from page 11

"The Bughran District is known for being on its own. We hope this meeting will help bring it into the province," said Glanz.

All of the district and village elders concerns were addressed during the meeting. Glanz said some will be fairly easy to start right away, possibly including a new school. "The current school is a mud structure and in a poor state of repair."

While the school project and a new health clinic may be part of some long-term goals, immediate aid was given during the visit. "We had a civil-assistance air drop," Glanz said. "It included 10 pallets of food, water, blankets, school supplies and tools. It was a gesture to say that we want to help."

Once the PRT becomes active in the district, there will be side benefits to the projects that aren't as obvious but are just as important, Glanz said. "The contractors will employ a lot of people and put some money into the local

economy. It will also show that the governments of Afghanistan and Helmand Province want to help and that the people in this district are not out here by

being security. As there is no large American or Afghan military presence in this part of the province, security will have to be provided and ensured by the local elders.

Baghrani was quick to address the issue and made strong assurances to the members present.

"Security cannot be provided by one person. It will take everybody," said Baghrani. "If someone gets hurt in Baghran, it is everyone's responsibility. We are promising these people that we will help provide security while they help us."

Baghrani continued during his speech to emphasize the importance of reconstruction beginning in the Bughran district.

"Reconstruction is now my jihad. It is now part of my

Islamic law," said Baghrani. "Everybody's job is reconstruction. Everyone should work together. That's how we fought the Russians; now we must fight for reconstruction."



Staff Sgt. Jacob Caldwell

Capt. Dan Glanz, Lashkar Gah Provincial Reconstruction Team civil affairs officer, speaks with the Bughran District chief about the completion of a health clinic in the village of Baghran.

themselves. This is not about America, this about Afghans helping themselves."

PRT members expressed concerns during the shura, the most pressing

Dari/Pashtu phrase of the week



Afghan cultural tidbit

Dari/Pashtu phrase of the week:

What is your name?

Dari

Esme Shuma chist

(Ess-may shoo-mah chest)

Pashtu

Tasu num su da

(Tasoo noom suh dah)

The two major languages in Afghanistan are Pashtu and Persian, known in Afghanistan as Dari. Both are Iranian languages. Persian or Dari is the principal West Iranian language and Pashtu the principal East Iranian language. Dari has always been the prestige language in Afghanistan. It is the language used when speakers of different languages need to conduct business or otherwise communicate. Other languages spoke in Afghanistan are Uzbek and Turkmen, spoken by minorities in the northern areas of Afghanistan.

(Source: <http://www.culturalorientation.net/afghan/aeco.html>)

Afghan army builds economy, brings fear to anti-Coalition militants

By Sgt. Douglas DeMaio
20th Public Affairs Detachment

FOB ANED, Afghanistan - After a little more than four months of being permanently based here, the Afghan National Army's 3rd Kandak, 1st Brigade, 203rd Corps, is making instability in Paktika Province look like a thing of the past.

With ANA troops operating out of bases in Shkin, Zormat, Orgun-E, Bermel and Lwara, triumph over anti-Coalition militants in Paktika is becoming more evident.

"The ACM fighters will not exist or have a future in Afghanistan due to the ANA," said Command Sgt. Maj. Mohammad Ashraf, the senior non-commissioned officer in the 3rd Kandak.

"The ACM fighters fear the ANA. It is a strong army that it is getting stronger day-by-day," Ashraf said. "As the number of the ANA increases, their fears arise more."

Paktika Province, once well known for being a frontier of lawlessness during Operation Enduring Freedom, is still a place of ACM activity, but the enemy no longer operates freely in the



An Afghan National Army soldier in Paktika Province stands ready with his rocket-propelled grenade launcher.

closely with the Kandak.

"They're sending a message that we've taken over your base and making it ours," said Beckman.

The ANA has played a significant role in bringing stability to the province, Beckman said.

"The importance really was putting an ANA face in Paktika Province," Beckman said.

Afghans in the province were very receptive to the ANA soldiers when they arrived to the area, Ashraf said.

"The first time we came here, when the people saw us and observed our

behavior, they were really impressed," said Ashraf. "The reason why they were impressed is that we represented the government."

What villagers came to understand very quickly was the ANA brought not only security to the

province but jobs as well, said kandak commander Col. Anbia, who like many Afghans goes by one name.

"There are a lot of opportunities for Afghans to find jobs for themselves," Anbia said of the job growth the ANA bases bring to the communities. "Afghans were living in disaster. It was a dark era in the past. Right now, people are recreating a lot of opportunities in Afghanistan. The country is going toward the light."



ANA soldiers prepare to roll out on a mission in the back of a truck.

interior of the province.

The enemy's fears are coming true and they no longer hold the ground they once did, Ashraf said.

In some cases, bases throughout the province that were once Taliban training camps are being taken over by the ANA, said Marine Lt. Col. Tom Beckman, commander of a 17-person embedded training team, who works



Afghan soldiers meet with residents about current ANA operations in the region.

Freedom Watch

June 12, 2005

Every area of trouble gives out a ray of hope; and the one unchangeable certainty is that nothing is certain or unchangeable.

John Fitzgerald Kennedy